Inn Farm Private Day Nursery

A Good Night’s Sleep

Most babies have learnt to sleep through the night by the age of 6 months so there is nothing more frustrating than having a one year old who is still waking you up at night. I have found the most effective method of establishing a good night’s sleep for a child is to have a routine that is stuck to regardless of whether it is a week day or a weekend. Routines can be started from when your child is a couple of days old and should certainly begin once they are 6 weeks old. To help your child set their body clock you can make the daytime feeds a social occasion with lots of eye contact and talking. However the night time feeds need to be quiet and calm with little or no eye contact.

All children should have a bedtime routine so that they realise that it is soon time for bed. Ideally it will start with a warming bath that gives the child the opportunity to have a good splash about and use up their last bit of physical energy before being snuggled in a warm towel. Once dry, massage your baby whilst singing nursery rhymes to them. Pop on a nappy and sleep attire, say ‘night night’ to the family and take them up to their room. It is always a good idea to read a short story before offering your child their bedtime feed.

Once your child has had their feed, give them a chance to fall asleep on their own. Put them in their cot, on their back, once they are drowsy but still awake. This will help them avoid developing a dependence on you to fall asleep and make it easier for them to self soothe and fall back to sleep again if they wake in the night. If you rock them or feed them to sleep they will begin to depend on it and you will be doing it for a long time!

If you have an older child who has taken to coming in to your bed during the night this does need addressing as it is disturbing your sleep and theirs. It is worth establishing why they are coming in to your bed as a child once said to me “I go into Mummy and Daddy’s bed to see if they are ok.” All the child required was gentle reassurance that his parents’ were fine and that stopped the night time visits. If your child comes into your bed, no matter how tired you are, you do need to take them back saying “it’s night time, go back to sleep in your own bed.” Do not engage in any conversation. Each time they come in, take them back and just say “go to sleep”. It is worth incentivising a child by maybe offering a sticker for each night they stay in their bed and then a special treat when they have achieved 5 stickers in a row. Remember perseverance is key and you are the one in charge! Good Luck!